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This qualitative research study explores the readers' advisory interview within the context of public library services to children. Eight practicing children's librarians were interviewed. The preferred methods of these librarians in helping children select books are discussed. Complexities and themes within the children's readers' advisory interview are also considered.

Headings:

Children--books and reading

Childrens librarians

Childrens libraries

Readers' advisory services

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF READERS' ADVISORY SERVICES TO
CHILDREN

by
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Introduction

Though public libraries have often been championed as the university of the people, they have come to serve not only the educational needs of their patrons, but also the recreational needs. Public libraries house large fiction collections and, in some cases, even DVD or video collections. The most popular titles are seldom in circulation because they boast long waiting lists. The newest books in the fiction collection are often shelved in a prominent location to facilitate easy access and browsing. Library book clubs also support patrons' interest in recreational reading.

Just as patrons may require the help of a librarian in their search for informational texts, they may also require help in their search for recreational texts. The practice of the reference interview, wherein the librarian asks a series of questions in order to determine both exactly what information the patron is seeking and also which sources will best meet this informational need, is heavily emphasized in library school curricula. When a patron seeks out the librarian's assistance in selecting their next recreational read, a process similar to the reference interview occurs. Though this process, generally known as the readers' advisory interview may be more conversational in tone than the reference interview, it also consists of a series of questions that the librarian puts to the reader in order to determine what books would be potential good fits for their reading tastes.

The readers' advisory interview is an inherently difficult task with adult patrons, and is even more difficult with children. Age of the child, reading level, appropriateness, parental preference, possible lack of reading history, communication skills, and library

literacy are all complicating factors in the children's readers' advisory interview. There has been little empirical research that focuses specifically on the children's readers' advisory interview.

Review of the Literature

Approaches to Readers' Advisory in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the practice of readers' advisory focused on self-improvement. The librarian provided directed reading lists for adult patrons as a way of furthering their education (May et al., 2001). The goal of readers' advisory for children and young adults during this time was similar, but focused on the protection of young readers' morals and health. Burek (2006) notes that the earliest instances of readers' advisory during the Progressive Era were concerned with preventing youth from reading sexually explicit books: reading books about sex was thought to lead youth to engage in sex. Burek argues that, in an era in which birth control and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases were not readily available, the practice of readers' advisory was an expression of concern for the health of the youth.

The Resurgence of Readers' Advisory

From roughly 1950 to 1980 readers' advisory fell out of fashion. Baker (1992) theorizes that this resulted from funding cuts and a lack of documentation by librarians of the practice and effectiveness of the readers' advisory method. However, Trott (2008) suggests that there were three major events in the 1980s that contributed to the resurgence of readers' advisory services: the publication of *Genreflecting* edited by Rosenberg in 1982; the establishment of the Chicago Area Adult Reading Roundtable (ARRT) in 1984, and the publication of the first edition of *Readers' Advisory Services in the Public Library* by Saricks and Brown in 1989. *Genreflecting* was notable for being the first

readers' advisory text to focus on genre. ARRT was a means for connecting readers' advisors together to share ideas. Saricks's and Brown's text introduced the concept of appeal which is still at the center of readers' advisory theory and practice (Trott, 2008). Saricks's and Brown's (1989) concept of appeal was a shift away from putting an emphasis on characterizing books by subject or even genre. They encouraged librarians to talk with readers about books they had enjoyed and why they had enjoyed them, using several factors such as characterization, frame, pacing or storyline. Readers could also specify what would make a book less appealing to them. Books and authors could then be grouped by appeal factors, facilitating ease in selecting more books that will appeal to the reader.

Research Studies

Very little empirical research exists on the readers' advisory interview. This prompted Baker (1992) to argue that the readers' advisory transaction is more complicated than the reference transaction and asserts that, "patrons looking for something good to read should not be treated like second-class citizens." Baker proposes several research needs within the topic of readers' advisory. First: to what extent is the readers' advisory interview being used in practice? Second: are these methods effective in increasing satisfaction with the library? Third: do readers' advisors allow personal preference to influence their practice? Fourth: how much do administrators value readers' advisory in their libraries?

Bracy and Shearer (1994) responded to Baker with their study attempting to answer Baker's first question: what was actually transpiring in practice in the readers' advisory interview. They conducted a study wherein graduate library science students at

North Carolina Central University posed as patrons in various North Carolina public libraries and asked the librarian for a book that was like a predetermined title. They developed a questionnaire for the students including the following questions, “What happens in a library when a client asks for something that is ‘like’ a title that the client enjoyed reading? What successes and failures occur? Who answers the request? How does the transaction proceed? Is each a completely unique transaction, or are there some general patterns that the field can begin to anticipate - some to be emulated, some to be avoided?”

Bracy and Shearer (1994) came to several conclusions. First, their research showed that paraprofessionals as well as professional librarians are qualified to do readers’ advisory. Second, the readers’ advisory interview is less about relating one book to another, and more about theorizing about the likelihood that a patron will appreciate a certain book based on their experience with a previous book. Third, the patron’s satisfaction with the readers’ advisory interview is potentially more dependent on the manners and courtesy, rather than on the skill, of the advisor. Fourth, several readers’ advisors studied were committing, “a subtle form of ethnic stereotyping” by basing recommendations on the race of the patron rather than the information that the patron had given them.

In 2001 May, Olesh, Weinlich, and Lackner conducted a study in the Nassau Library System in New York. The study used an unobtrusive method similar to the Bracy study. Several students posing as patrons waited in the stacks to be acknowledged by a librarian. They then asked the librarian, “Can you help me find a good book?” The May study presumed a greater familiarity with the standard readers’ advisory model on

the part of the librarian, unlike the Bracy study wherein the students prompted the staff member towards the formal readers' advisory interview by requesting their next book based on a book that they had previously enjoyed.

Only two of the fifty-four librarians questioned asked the student about the last book they had enjoyed. Eighty percent of the librarians asked about the types of books that the student read. Only one asked why the student liked a particular book. None of the librarians asked probing questions about characters, pacing or any of Saricks's other appeal terms. Many librarians talked of their own reading preferences and a few said that they did not read. Furthermore, as was the case in the Bracy study, students noted the librarians' manner and attitude. Many librarians appeared irritated by the question, and forty-two percent of librarians spent between five and ten minutes engaged with the students. Professional readers' advisory tools were only used by forty-six percent of the librarians (and the majority of these were using the OPAC) and passive readers' advisory tools (such as annotated bibliographies, booklists, and bookmarks) were only available at a few libraries and "designated readers' advisors or RA librarians appear to be almost

Recent Trends in Readers' Advisory

In the past ten years scholarly articles have shown four major trends developing in readers' advisory research. These themes are: RA on the web, revising Saricks's appeal terms, listening to how readers talk about books, and taking the mood of the reader into account.

Repman and Jones (2012) describe the general connectedness of students and their desire to talk in an electronic context with their friends about what they are reading. The article

lists several web tools, such as NoveList, the online readers' advisory database invented by the readers' advisor Duncan Smith in 1990.

Another consequence of the digital age that readers' advisors have taken into account is how to provide readers' advisory services to patrons who access the catalog and choose books remotely through the internet. Trott and Tarulli (2011) argue that catalogers and readers' advisors should collaborate to provide access points within the catalog based on appeal terms. They claim that the online catalog encourages patrons to take part in the readers' advisory process by enabling patrons to tag and review books.

Wyatt (2007) summarizes the changes that he and members of what he calls "the RA Big Think Team" see for the future of readers' advisory. The "team" includes RA scholars, Chelton, Hollands, Jacobsen, Olson, Pearl, Pulver, Saricks, Smith and Trott. The team considered Saricks's appeal factors and concluded that the frame factor needed to be redefined and that format needed to be added to the list. While frame is, "being recast as an expression of the details and description of a book that contribute to the story's world building", format refers to the way the story is delivered such as via audiobook, e-book, graphic novel, etc.

The team also came to the conclusion that readers' advisors need to begin rethinking genre. Saricks advocates books under four headings according to appeal terms. These four headings are: adrenaline, (the key appeal aspect is pacing), intellect, (the key appeal aspect is language and the inner life of character), emotion (the key appeal aspect is feeling and character motivation) and landscape (the key appeal aspect is setting).

A last key modification of Saricks's appeal terms is the tendency to focus on the mood of the reader. Ross and Chelton (2001) argued that the first question the advisor should ask the reader is, "what are you in the mood for?"

Another key shift in thinking about readers' advisory is the emerging practice of using the way a reader talks about a book as a readers' advisory tool. This practice is described by Pearl in "An RA Big Think". Pearl is known for coining the term "doorways". Pearl argues that we can enter a book through four different doorways: story, setting, character or language. A reader enters the book through the doorway that they find most engaging. Pearl argues that readers' advisors can analyze the way a reader talks about a favorite book in order to discern which doorway they find the most effective. Smith (2009) practices this in his 2009 article "Your Brain on Fiction". He interviews the same reader over a period of twenty years. One among many of the observations that he makes is her tendency to talk about the characters in the books she enjoys, thus demonstrating Pearl's theory by showing the reader entering books through the "character doorway".

Children's and Young Adults Readers' Advisory

Even less empirical research exists on the children's' and young adults' readers' advisory interview. The majority of the literature consists of case studies that describe and promote a particular readers' advisory tool such as a game or method that is being implemented by the writer of the article, often a librarian in a public library or school media center. It is generally thought that much of the major practices in adult readers' advisory hold true in children's readers' advisory. For example, a school media librarian, Nesi (2010) describes how she teaches young adults to discuss books in terms of

Saricks's appeal factors. She maintains a notebook full of student written book reviews she calls "book hooks". In the review, students are asked to describe the book in terms of pacing, characterization, storyline and tone. Students then use the notebook as a resource to help select their next book.

In *Serving Teens Through Readers' Advisory* Heather Booth notes that the nature of the readers' advisory interview with teens differs from the adult readers' advisory interview saying, "we can best communicate with teens by being clearer and more direct....We need to make extra efforts in our readers' advisory conversations to display our attention to and interest in what teens are asking for and saying" (Booth, 2007, p. 29). Booth outlines the three essentials of the readers' advisory interview: good interview behaviors like active listening, a conversational style that lets the patron know you are happy to discuss leisure reading, and using appeal factors in asking about the patron's reading history and talking about potential next reads. Booth goes on to talk about the importance of reading teens' body language to determine their openness to recommendations or when to approach them for a potential readers' advisory interview. Prior to asking questions using appeal factors, Booth suggests asking the following questions: "Do you read a lot or not so much?", "Are you looking for a specific book that you know of?", "Can you think of a book that you've really liked recently?", "Have you read anything recently that you've really hated?" (Booth, 2007, p. 54). Booth also advocates that YA librarians set a personal reading goal in order to increase their knowledge of and ability to recommend YA literature.

In *Readers' Advisory for Children and 'Tweens*, librarian Penny Peck outlines some of the issues unique to children's readers' advisory. She relies on a knowledge of

child development to determine when a child is ready to begin selecting books on their own without the aid of a parent. She decides on age eight – often referred to as the “age of reason” when children begin to be able to tell right from wrong and to distinguish fantasy from reality – but notes ultimately that, “every child in a particular age group is not at the same developmental level, so a great rule of thumb is to be flexible and let parents determine what books would be the best ‘fit’ for their children” (Peck, 2010, p. 3). Peck also argues that letting the child take the lead in choosing what they want to read is essential. To support this argument she summarizes the “Reader Response Theory” outlined in Nancy Atwell’s *The Reading Zone*, which states that “readers respond best to books when they are allowed to choose what they read; reading ability also increases (Peck, 2010, p. 4).” To put this into practice Peck suggests that, not unlike the adult readers’ advisory interview, the advisor should ask what the last book that the child read and enjoyed, but should also “by celebrating their enthusiasm for book they mention you make young readers feel validated” (Peck, 2010, p. 4). Allowing children to choose both above and below their grade level, as well as suggesting multiple titles also gives children a wide range in which to make their own decisions.

Peck goes on to provide a template for the readers’ advisory interview, and while there are some questions in common with the standard adult readers’ advisory interview, such as “can you think of a book you read and liked?” many of the questions are unique to children such as, “What grade are you in?”, “Is this for homework or for fun?”, “Is there a hobby or sport you like?”, and “What movies and TV shows do you like?” Peck also emphasizes the importance of body language during the children’s readers’ advisory transaction saying, “the way you present yourself to a child or ‘tween can make a big

difference in how he or she responds to your questions” and notes some ways to use body language to give children a positive impression including, “make eye contact”, “smile”, and “listen with your full attention” among others (Peck, 2001, 7). Many aspects of adult readers’ advisory best practices hold true in Peck’s presentation of the best practices for the children’s readers’ advisory interview; however, no version of Sarricks’s appeal terms is ever mentioned.

Methods

As the literature illustrates, very little research exists on the children's readers' advisory interview and the complexities that make it unique. Further, while Booth's (2007) and Peck's (2010) text outlined the best practices of readers' advisory to teens and children respectively, no studies have been conducted that investigate the day to day practice of children's readers' advisory as compared with these best practices. This study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

- How do the methods of children's readers' advisory practiced by the librarians interviewed conform to or differ from the best practices as outlined in the literature?
- What are some of the complexities that the librarians interviewed have encountered in providing children's readers' advisory, including barriers to providing this service, difficulties encountered, and successful strategies practiced?

In his book *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach* John W. Creswell describes the process of qualitative research saying, “ the process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general theme, and the researcher making interpretation of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at

research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation.” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The literature suggests that the nature of the readers’ advisory interview is highly individualized to the reader. The emphasis put on conversation throughout the best practices demonstrates this. A qualitative research design was selected in order to best investigate the “complexity of [the] situation” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

Prior to collecting data a proposal was submitted to the UNC Institutional Review Board and permission was granted to conduct a study using human subjects. In order to be eligible for participation in the study practicing children’s librarians did not have to possess a master’s degree in library science, but did need to have some experience in providing readers’ advisory services to children. The principle investigator contacted the librarians by email. A convenience sample of eight librarians was selected. Semi-structured interviews served as the data collection method in order to “focus on individual meaning”, in this case the meaning that each individual librarian ascribed to various readers’ advisory interviews they had conducted with children. The interviews took place in the “participant’s setting” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The interviews ranged from twenty to thirty minutes in length depending on the participant’s responses to questions. The interview focused on the children’s readers’ advisory interview with questions broken down into three categories: demographics, readers’ advisory in practice, and barriers and difficulties in providing this service. The best practices of readers’ advisory as outlined in the review of the literature served as guides for formatting the main questions of the interview. The interview questionnaire is attached in the appendix.

Each of the interviews was audio recorded. The recordings were then transcribed. Member checking was used to ensure accuracy. Each transcript was sent back to the librarian who was given the opportunity to read and review the transcript for accuracy (member-checking). Themes were identified based on the research questions. The interviews were coded according to these themes. Once coded, the data were organized according to the research questions. Demographics will be summarized for each participant and taken into account according to the relevance regarding the research questions. A description of the participants, themes and setting was constructed based on the codes. This description, mentioned above, was written in a narrative format. Pseudonyms were used in the write up of the data to preserve anonymity.

Findings

Demographics

Of the eight children's librarians interviewed, only one did not have a master's degree in library science. Only two librarians' job responsibilities consisted solely of youth services related work. Other responsibilities of the remaining six librarians included working the circulation desk, covering the adult services desk, supervising community service volunteers, running annual festivals, administrative tasks including advocating for the youth services department to the rest of the library management team, attending meetings with other librarians, and performing repairs for the library facility. Librarians' years of experience providing readers' advisory ranged from four to nineteen years. All eight librarians were full time employees.

Readers' Advisory Methodology

As a means of determining the most commonly used method of readers' advisory each librarian was asked the question, "Tell me about the last time that a child asked you to recommend a good book." In describing their most recent transaction a pattern emerged. The librarian would begin with a series of questions to determine what the child was really looking for in a manner similar to the reference interview. For example, Helen described a set of twins who asked her to recommend a book saying, "They were pretty specific. Their good book had to be historical fiction pioneer time....and after asking some questions, you know they had to be in and out because it's for a project tomorrow." By asking questions that revealed that the girls needed a historical fiction

book, specifically about pioneers, for a project tomorrow, Helen was able to refine her search to more specifically fit their needs which Helen summarized as, “What they wanted was really thin [short] because...they wanted something they could get through.” When asked about her last readers’ advisory transaction Anna described a similar process wherein she asked clarifying questions of the child saying:

[the child said] ‘Can you recommend a book about fashion designers?’, and I said, ‘like a biography of a particular fashion designer?’, ‘Yes’, ‘I don’t think we have many in the kid’s collection. I know we have one on Coco Channel. ‘That’s the one I have to do a project on.’ ‘Oh, ok, sure we have one of those but it’s like a picture book length and you’re like fifth grade, so we also have adult books. Let me show you what we’ve got.’

Speaking more generally about their methodology of providing readers advisory, other questions librarians noted having used were:

- How quickly do you need it?
- Is this for homework or for fun?
- Does it have to be this specific book or something like it?
- What grade are you in?

Beyond more basic clarifying questions, all but one of the librarians interviewed said that they routinely asked the child about the last book they read or about a book that they had read and liked. A few librarians mentioned this when describing a specific readers’ advisory interview, and others mentioned it later when asked about their readers’ advisory methodology in general, though Elizabeth noted that she tended to start by

asking what kinds of books they like reading first, and then move to asking about the last book they read only if they could not answer.

A few librarians were able to expand upon why asking this particular question was helpful to them. For example, Helen used the twins' answer to this question to theorize about their reading level saying, "I found out their reading level... I asked, usually I ask, 'what is it that you have read recently that you've liked?' and they could come up with nothing." Jessica, the only librarian interviewed who never mentioned asking the child to describe a specific book, when prompted as to whether she asked about their reading history said that she asked the more general question, "what have you been reading?" or "What have you read?"

A question following the question regarding a book they have read and liked is often, "What did you like about it?" or "Why did you like it?" Of the seven librarians who said they asked about the last book that they had read, five attempted to determine why a child liked the book they mentioned. For example, later in the interview Helen also mentioned using the same question to determine what the child is looking for in a book saying, "we can talk about, 'well, why did you like it?'" She then goes on to provide more specific follow up questions to this saying, "Is it 'Did you like that author?' or 'Did you like that time period' those types of questions." Anna also said that she tended to provide these kinds of follow up questions saying, "If they say, 'I like Diary of a Wimpy Kid' I might say, 'Do you like funny books? Do you like books with both text and illustration? Are you looking for realistic fiction?'" noting that she finds it easier to ask these kinds of questions rather than asking why the child liked the book because "kids are shy and not really sure what they liked about something" but these questions can make it

easier to “grab onto something that you mentioned.” In contrast to this Kristen said, “I ask them ‘What did you like?’ I try to use the open ending questions like they taught you before in school.”

Five of the eight librarians interviewed also asked about the child’s general interests. Both Elizabeth and Dana said that this was a useful question if the child does not have an answer to the question, “What was the last book you read?” For example, Dana said that, though she usually starts the interview with this question, “fifty percent of the time they’re like, ‘I don’t know,’” she proceeds to ask, “What do you like to do? What shows do you watch? Find out what interests them in general.” Elizabeth also noted that asking about their other interests could be helpful if they “don’t necessarily like” her question about the last book they read. She also noted that in this situation she may ask about the television shows they watch in order to “get an idea of what types of stories interest them.” Both Kristen and Kimberly said that they asked about general interests even when the child had an answer to their question about the last book they read. Asking this question helped them to gain a deeper understanding of what the child might be interested in. Furthermore, Kimberly gave an example of how knowing specific interests of the child might lead her to recommend specific titles saying:

If you’ve got somebody who likes video games, you’ve got Vivian Van Velde *Heir Apparent* which is kind of about a video game in the future, game playing, so then I might say, ‘Well you might like this’, go from there.

Asking about general interest was the method of readers’ advisory that Jessica mentioned most frequently in the interview. For example, in describing a typical readers’

advisory transaction she said, “you just find out what they like.” Later in the interview describing boys specifically who come in looking for a good book she said, “they don’t really know what they want, and so [I ask], ‘Do you like sports?’ and then I’ll send them to Matt Christopher, or ‘Do you like mysteries?’ find out what they like.” When asked to summarize what method of readers’ advisory worked best for her she echoed her earlier statements saying, “Ask them what they want, and what they are interested in and help them find it before they change their mind about if they even want to be in here.”

All but one of the librarians said that they relied heavily on their own reading background during the readers’ advisory interview. Furthermore, there seemed to be a commonly held opinion regardless of the number of years of experience a librarian had or whether or not they had a degree in library science, that reading children’s literature was very important to them. Dana said that she believed that “a major part of readers’ advisory is actually knowing the books.” Anna echoed this view noting:

The more you read the better. That’s what I always try to tell people when they are coming to me for advice or when I’m interviewing people, I really want to make sure that people have read and read for fun because they make the best recommendations.

Kristen, who was the only librarian who did not rely heavily on her own reading history, said that she did rely on more general knowledge of “what’s out there.” She did acknowledge her own reading background saying:

When I was in library school I read lots and I can still recommend some of those because some are classics or really good, but others, I’ve got to

read more, and some of the stuff just doesn't interest me, and that's hard to deal with.

Further in the interview she expressed a wish to be able to read more saying:

I wish I had time to read more, because then I would know more. Now, they give us time off in April, August and November when we don't do programming in the whole system. So, I caught up in December and I'm hoping to catch up again in April.

The seven librarians who did rely heavily on their own reading background followed a similar pattern. Generally after determining what kind of book the child is looking for they are able to recall their reading history and select a book that would fit these parameters. Jessica said this method worked particularly well for children with short attention spans saying:

It's kind of like a game to me if I can pull one out of my head, and not have to go behind the desk to the computer, I can do it faster, because you might lose them just from going behind the desk, and then they start wandering around.

While all the librarians interviewed said that they went to the shelves at some point in the process to pull something for the child, two cited going to the shelves as a tool of jogging their own memory. Elizabeth, for example, noted:

When I'm doing readers' advisory...when it's a little less specific as opposed to searching the catalog I will usually walk through the area and pick out books as I see them, because there are a lot of books that I might

not necessarily think of off the top of my head, but I'll see the cover or the spine and be like, 'Oh yeah, this one.'

Additionally, reading a book better enables the librarian to describe elements that may appeal to the child. Helen advocates for this process, commonly known as a book talk, saying, "You have to have read the book and like it, truly, in order to sell it...I like to get the kids interested in the characters or the plot or whatever is the main piece of the book." Dana said that she reads what is most popular and expects her staff to do the same:

There are certain series where they are just so popular that I decided I needed to read one to know some of the characters and be able to tell the kids like *Geronimo Stilton* or the Ron Roy *A-Z Mysteries*...I even told my staff, 'You need to read this'.

Two librarians mentioned their particular ability to recommend fantasy and science fiction titles since they read heavily in this genre. Anna said:

I tend to read more fantasy than anyone else in my division so a lot of times fantasy readers are pretty voracious and so if they come to someone who doesn't read fantasy they are apt to say, 'Read that. Read that. Read that.' And if you don't read it then you may be stumped....You know authors that everyone was reading five years ago but now they've moved on to something else ...you can go there and they've never heard of it and they think you're awesome.

Another reason that Ruth noted for being well read in her collection was so that she would have knowledge of content that parents may deem potentially inappropriate for their child. Appropriateness of content for certain ages was an issue that came up repeatedly in interviews and will be addressed in the “complexities” section.

While personal reading history was the most commonly used method of readers’ advisory among the librarians interviewed, many librarians admitted to gaps in their own knowledge of children’s literature. When it became clear to them that a child was looking for a book in a genre that they were perhaps unfamiliar with, the most commonly cited methods of dealing with this were the use of booklists and the reading background of other youth services staff members.

One countywide system that employed four of the librarians maintained standardized booklists across branches that were updated frequently. Books were grouped on these lists by topic, genre, grade, and booklists put together by kids called “Kid2Kid Booklists” that Helen mentioned specifically as being helpful because, “kids want to read a book that their friends are reading, so that’s a big draw.” All four of the librarians working in this county system mentioned using these booklists, and three cited these as one of the first places they went when they confronted gaps in their own reading history. Anna who works outside of this county system mentioned using some of the booklists she had written over the years saying, “I’ve...done a lot of thematic bibliographies over time so even if I haven’t read a ton of books on a subject I may have put together a booklist on it.” Even though Dana did not specifically mention using booklists in readers’ advisory transactions she did say that she considered “keeping lists” to be among the best practices of readers’ advisory.

Most librarians were aware of both the gaps in their own reading background and the genres in which their coworkers read heavily, so they knew when to turn to the booklists or other staff members. For example if a child were to say:

‘I want scary books. I’ve read all the R.L. Stine,’ Ruth would say, I’m not really into scary, so that’s when I have to turn to the list that says, ‘If you like scary things as a kid, here are all the scary books.’

Most librarians talked about gaps in their reading history based on genre, but Kimberly noted gaps in terms of format saying, “I do rely on staff, because we have a staff member who loves graphic novels. I don’t read graphic novels...but she is really into them.” In some instances, particularly when asked about popular titles they had not read librarians were able to memorize titles that were similar, negating the necessity of turning to booklists or other staff members. For example, Elizabeth said:

There are a lot of genres that I don’t read as much as others...so there are other books that are just like my go to for kids who are interested in other things, so like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, I mean I don’t read a whole lot of kid’s diary style books but I know what we have that fits that genre.

Professional Tools

Because nearly all the librarians surveyed used their own reading history and the reading history of their coworkers as well as booklists when conducting readers’ advisory interviews, their mention of professional tools focused mostly on their own attempts to stay current in children’s literature. In addition to their own reading, frequently cited websites were Amazon and GoodReads.com. On GoodReads.com, a social networking site, members can add books to virtual bookshelves, rate and review books, take part in

discussions and follow other people and authors. Ruth noted that GoodReads.com kept her aware of new books by well-liked authors saying, “I subscribe to certain authors on GoodReads.com and they’ll say, ‘Hey Todd Angleberger has a new one coming out.’” Amazon.com was particularly helpful for the blurbs of reviews from professional journals such as *School Library Journal*. Though librarians sometimes additionally mentioned using Amazon.com or GoodReads.com when prompted for specific resources they used when providing readers’ advisory services, none ever mentioned using them when talking about a specific instance or describing their most commonly practiced methods.

Six librarians mentioned specific review journals that they consistently kept up with. *School Library Journal* was the most frequently mentioned review journal followed by *Booklist* and *Publisher’s Weekly*. Anna followed more journals than anyone else. In addition to *School Library Journal*, *Booklist* and *Publisher’s Weekly* she mentioned *Kirkus*, *Bulletin*, *Hornbook* and *VOYA* (Voices of Youth Advocates). Anna was also the only librarian who said that she felt confident in her ability to keep up with children’s literature. Among the librarians who regularly read reviews to keep up with children’s literature, Ruth, expressed mixed feelings about them saying:

I’m not going to say I discount reviews, but I don’t put a lot of stock in them, because everyone has their own approach to a book, you know you have whatever prior knowledge you have and you bring that to what you read.

Kristen and Jessica were the only two librarians who did not say that they consistently followed review journals. Kristen said that she tried to read *School Library Journal*, “but that is few and far between because I am busy with program planning and

actually presenting programs most of the day.” While Jessica said that she regularly read “catalogs, magazines...periodicals”, when asked for specific titles she replied, “Just what we get here” and mentioned only the more popular publication *Bookpage* specifically. When asked if she ever read reviews she replied that she did not.

Each librarian was asked if she were familiar with the readers’ advisory database NoveList K-8, the children’s version of NoveList, invented by Duncan Smith and mentioned in the review of the literature. Seven of the eight librarians were familiar with NoveList; however, it seemed to be a tool used only if the preferred methods of using personal reading history, booklists and staff members reading history proved insufficient. Four of the eight librarians said they tended to use it if they confronted gaps in their own knowledge. For example Kristen said if she was unfamiliar with the last book the child had read she could look the book up on NoveList and determine the kind of question she need to be asking. Other librarians used it when the child was looking for something very specific, such as Elizabeth’s experience with a child who came in wanting, “fantasy books but the main characters needed to be animals but they need to also be taking place in the past.” Other often cited reasons for using NoveList were to find the order of a series and when working with parents seeking out books on their child’s behalf, particularly when they were looking for a Lexile rating or books on a specific reading level.

Two librarians expressed a dislike of NoveList, and thus did not often use it. Helen disliked it because many of the recommended read alike were not in their county’s system. She noted that she was more likely to turn to the online library catalog through the county, because it had a “similar titles” feature that was similar to the read

alikes feature on NoveList but, unlike NoveList, she could be sure that these titles were in their catalog. Anna disliked using NoveList because she disagreed with the recommended read alike. She said there were:

repeated incidents where I completely disagree with them and you lose that trust. I love the resource. I love the people who work there but it just goes to show you that you can know about a book and be very professional and make a recommendation based on what it seems like the book is about, but if you haven't read it you may not get that those are not at all for the same audience.

Only one librarian, Jessica, was completely unfamiliar with NoveList.

Complexities

There were several issues unique to children's readers' advisory that came up repeatedly in the interviews. All eight librarians mentioned reading level. Of the five librarians that mentioned specific methods for determining reading level, four mentioned opening books and allowing children to flip through, allowing them to assess their comfort level with the difficulty of the book. Two of these four used the children's reading history as a starting point.

Dana noted that all of the schools in her county consistently used the Accelerated Reader system of determining reading level. She found that most children know what level they are on. She has found, however, when children put too much stock in seeking out books on a particular reading level they may be limiting themselves saying:

We've had parents complain about the fact that we don't have stickers on them, but from one classroom to the next they have different stickers or

labels or whatever. So we have adamantly refused to do that because we want kids to read because they want to read, as opposed to ‘Oh look that’s a green level book.’

Jessica, who also works in a county that uses Accelerated Reader and does put stickers denoting level on the spine also expressed a frustration with children who “get stuck on the grade sticker”. Further in her interview Dana notes a skepticism in terms of the Accelerated Reader saying, “you can compare two books and one might be a three point five and the other a five point seven and the only real difference is some of the vocabulary but they are really about the same reading level.” She did note, however, that she found Accelerated Reader ratings to be helpful in the easy reader section. The above quote suggests that, though Dana works in a county that emphasizes a specific system, her knowledge of the collection is still a factor when helping children select a book suited to their reading level as is the case in other counties that do not adopt one system.

There was some disagreement among the librarians as to whether it was generally advisable to push children to read above their reading level. Three librarians noted that they tend to disagree with parents who express frustration that their children’s reading choices are not challenging enough for them. Two other librarians, however, expressed an opinion that was similar to the parent view in the other scenarios, saying that if children never challenge themselves they will never improve.

Ruth spoke about parents who were annoyed that their child wanted to read the same book repeatedly. In this situation she tried “to tell the parent that their reading something repeatedly is not a bad thing...because that’s how kids learn.” She said that she had also encountered many parents who, “want their kids to be reading something

more, something different, something higher level”, but she maintained that, “you want a child to enjoy what they’re reading.” In similar situations Kristen said she might also try to educate the parents about how picking book that a child is easily able to read would positively benefit their self-esteem saying:

It’s ok that this isn’t hard as something that the teacher wants him reading.

If you want him to be reading it’s got to be something that he can do on his own and feel successful and it’s not a struggle.

Elizabeth, who said asking “what types of books [a child] is comfortable reading to be one of the best practices of readers’ advisory,” noted that a potential solution to this problem is suggesting a variety of titles to the child including some on the reading level the child is looking for and some on the reading level the parent is looking for. In contrast both Dana and Jessica expressed a view similar to that of the parents mentioned by the other three librarians. They felt it was better for children to be reading above their reading level. While Dana was more insistent saying, “I strongly encourage parents to encourage their kids to read above their level because if Suzy’s in 1.3 [an Accelerated Reader level] and all she reads is 1.3 then she’s never going to get any better”, Jessica said that she liked to give children books both above and below their reading level. She expressed the view that, “there’s nothing wrong with...reading...bubble gum for your brain...but you still want to read something that takes a little more challenge.”

Five out of eight librarians also talked about the issue of recommending books that were appropriate for children in terms of content. Here knowledge of the collection also becomes very import, especially when children come in requesting a title shelved in young adult. Both Anna and Kimberly remarked that young children requesting the

Twilight series by Stephanie Meyer was a frequent occurrence. Anna described her method of dealing with this situation saying:

If it's an elementary school kid I might say, 'We have it in our teen area. You might want to check with a parent before you read it. It's about vampires and it's got romance in it.' And then, 'Do you want *Twilight* specifically or do you want another vampire story?' 'Do you just want something with a little bit of romance in it?' So try and gauge whether, 'No, my friend was reading *Twilight*, that's the only thing that will do' in which case give it to them with a disclaimer' ...[such as] 'This one's pretty tame. It gets more explicit as the series goes on. You might want to talk it over with somebody.'

The above quote is a good illustration of how a librarian used two previously mentioned methods of readers' advisory, knowledge of the collection and asking follow up questions to determine what a child is looking for in a book, to address an issue unique to youth services: selecting books without content that many parents would deem too mature for their children. Anna needed to have enough knowledge of *Twilight* to know that the books were too mature for younger readers, while at the same time knowing that determining why they were looking for *Twilight* would help her find a similar book in the juvenile section. It should also be noted that Anna did not prevent the child from checking out the book if no other book would satisfy the child and she was, "not trying to bring the judgment in."

Another notable theme that may or may not be unique to the children's readers' advisory interview was the tendency of librarians to note the tendencies and reading

preferences of either gender. Five librarians made statements that suggested they may view gender as a factor in the readers' advisory process. Both Anna and Dana's mention of gender was minimal, Anna noting that she had made use of the texts *Great Books for Boys* and *Great Books for Girls* to guide her personal reading of children's literature, and Dana mentioning recommending books with female protagonists to girls. The additional three librarians were more explicit in noting that gender was a factor in the readers' advisory interview. All three were basing their statements on past experience. For example, Ruth expressed a hesitancy to recommend certain books to boys in particular saying, "There's a certain age where if you hand them a book and the main character is a girl and they're a boy, then they are not going to get into it." She noted that one way to avoid this problem was to recommend books with both a strong male and female main characters.

Whereas it was evident that past experiences with gender preference could lead a librarian to avoid recommending certain books to certain genders, they also tended to talk about a specific gender's predilection towards certain books. For example, Jessica was able to speak about what girls had checked out in the past saying, "the girls, they know what they want, they want the fairies, the horses, the American Girl, and you just show them where it's at," this knowledge clearly influenced the recommendations she made to other girls who did not know exactly what they wanted as later in the interview listing titles she often recommended as, "for a girl, *Animal Ark*, *Pony Pals*, the *Daisy Meadows Fairies Series*, *American Girl*, the more adventuresome girls we go for the *Warriors* series."

Sometimes suggestions based on gender were as broad as a suggestion towards a whole section of the library. For example, Kristen noted, “with boys I’ll take them to more than anything else is the nonfiction and the graphic novels, because those are the two that pull the interest more.” Similarly, sometimes recommendations based on gender began not with a particular title or topic, but with assumptions about the gender itself. For example, when Kristen was describing the last readers’ advisory transaction she could recall she was in the process of recommending particular easy readers. She describes the conversation saying, ““Do you like girly books or do you like books on animals? What kinds of books do you like? Do you like the princess stuff?’ And she did, ‘Do you like *Fancy Nancy*?’ And I showed her some *Fancy Nancys*.”

Knowledge of the Best Practices of Readers’ Advisory

All of the librarians were asked, “Are you aware of some of the best practices of readers’ advisory?” None of the librarians surveyed could cite specific practitioners or their methods such as Joyce Saricks and the concept of appeal terms or Nancy Pearl and the concept of doorways. Furthermore, all of the librarians reacted to this question with some measure of confusion or hesitancy.

The only specific formal methodology that was mentioned was the Maryland Model. It was mentioned by three different librarians who all work in the same county. When asked to synopsise this model Kimberly said it was a method, “that you could use for pleasure reading as well as reference questions”, and consisted of, “asking open ended questions when you are figuring out what someone wants to read, and getting an idea of exactly what it is they are looking for.” Ruth summarized the model saying, “pulling from them, having them talk to you and tell you what they like, because often they will

come up and say, ‘I want this, I want that’ and then it just goes off onto another track.” Helen summarized it the most succinctly saying, “Trying to find out what they are really asking for.” The clarifying questions asked at the beginning of many of the readers’ advisory interviews described, such as, “Is this for homework or for fun?”, “Do you need this right away?” and “Does it have to be this specific book or something like it?” seem to illustrate instances when this model was put into practice.

Most of the summaries of best practices mentioned asking questions of the child such as the ones listed above, but also, as Anna noted “asking kids what they are reading and liking and why”, and, in a more broad sense as Jessica said, “ask them what they want and what they are interested in.” Both Dana and Anna considered being very familiar with children’s literature to be among the best practices. Elizabeth and Kristen also spoke about best practices more specific to children such as, in Elizabeth’s words, “talking to the child instead of the parent”, and in Kristen’s words, making “eye contact and observing their body language” as well as, “letting them know that it’s ok if they don’t like something that you suggest.”

Master’s Degree and Years of Experience

Only one librarian, Jessica, did not have a master’s degree in library science. The major similarity that she shared with the other librarians who did have master’s degrees was the view that in order to be skilled in readers’ advisory, a librarian had to be well read in her collection, saying, “I read stuff so I can recommend it.” In describing her specific interactions with children, however, it became clear that there was little use of clarifying questions. Whereas many librarians mentioned conducting an interview similar to a standard reference interview, what three librarians referred to as the Maryland

Model, in order to really determine what the child is really looking for, Jessica was less likely to ask these open ended questions. If a child could not come up with an answer to the question of what they liked or what their general interests were, she began to suggest specific interests, titles or authors that were based on the gender of the child and what she knew to be popular.

She was the only librarian who did not ask about the specific last book a child had read or one that they had read and liked. When prompted as to whether she ever asked about reading history she said, “Yes, authors or topics”, but not, however, open ended questions about the last book. One approach that was unique to her methodology was mentioning characters from books instead of the titles of the books themselves. She summarized this method saying, “Do you like Jack and Annie? Instead of saying *Magic Tree House*...They’ll remember Jack and Annie before they’ll remember *Magic Tree House*.”

In contrast to others interviewed Jessica exhibited less knowledge of professional tools. She was the only librarian who had never heard of NoveList and the only librarian who said that she never read reviews. When asked to summarize her understanding of the best practices of readers’ advisory she admitted her lack of training. She went on to summarize the methods that worked best for her, but was more general than anyone else reiterating her method of finding out what the child liked.

Jessica also made several statements that revealed a bias against graphic novels. Saying, for example:

I try to steer them away from that [graphic novels] a little bit. I call it grown up comic books. And if that’s all they want, then that’s all you give them

but I try to give them the books, ‘Hey if you like pictures, check out this *Great Illustrated Classic*, you know, *Treasure Island*, real adventure, rather than just totally fictitious transformers and that kind of stuff.

While Kimberly had mentioned that she did not read graphic novels and thus had to rely on her coworker’s knowledge of them, no other librarians expressed this bias against this genre or any other genre. In fact, both Anna and Kristen mentioned graphic novels in a positive sense. Anna remarked that sometimes if children have been “prepped by their parent to not come in and say, ‘let me have a comic book’, but that’s really what [they] want and so if you mention pictures... you’ve given them permission because you’ve mentioned it first.” Graphic novels were also mentioned by Kristen as being used often because they “pulled interest” and a read alike for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

There did not seem to be substantial difference between the librarians who had more years of experience or less years of experience in terms of knowledge of best practices. Librarians who had been providing readers’ advisory for a longer period of time were able to provide more examples to illustrate their methodology, and appeared to be more confident and sure of themselves.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that the practice of providing readers' advisory services to children conforms to the best practices as outlined in the literature in as much as the librarians are routinely asking about the last book the child read and why they liked it. Although no librarians mentioned terms specific to the methodology outlined by practitioners in the field such as appeal terms or doorways, it does appear that through the question of "Why did you like that book?" or "What did you like about it?", asked by five of the eight librarians, a similar process is occurring whereby a librarian is attempting to pull out specific elements of a book to pinpoint what a child is looking for in their reading experience. While not all of the questions following this first general question may be necessarily related to specific appeal terms such as frame, pacing or storyline, certain questions that librarians mentioned asking such as, as Helen mentioned, "Did you want that time period?" or, as Dana mentioned, "whether it's the characters or whether it's the setting" may elicit responses from the children that will cause them to speak about elements of appeal which supports Duncan Smith (2009) and Nancy Pearl's (2007) more inductive approach of listening to the way readers talk about books in order to determine what appeals to them. Additionally, the mention of graphic novels by three different librarians and the mention of audio books by two different librarians may speak to the recent trend of adding format to appeal factors (Wyatt, 2007). It is also clear that asking more general questions, such as questions about the child's interests, as Peck advocates, is a method that many librarians use if a child lacks much reading history or is unable to

talk about it. This method was also used to gain a fuller picture of what the child may want to read (Peck, 2010). Complexities unique to the children's readers' advisory interview include reading level, appropriateness of content for a specific age, and recommendations based on gender.

Further Research

The study serves to provide greater understanding of the practice of readers' advisory to children as seen through the eyes of librarians participating in the process daily. It demonstrates the complexities of the method and variance of approaches, and the ways in which it differs from the practice of adult readers' advisory. Due to the lack of empirical studies focusing on the children's readers' advisory transaction, this study may serve as a starting point outlining major themes or questions within the research area that need further exploration. Potential areas for further exploration may be librarians' perception of certain systems for determining reading level such as Lexile and Accelerated Reader and how these perceptions compare with those of parents and teachers, how gender influences reading recommendations, and the overall success, as determined by children's satisfaction with books, of specific readers' advisory methodologies.

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Appendix A: Email Recruitment Text

Subject Line: Invitation to Participate in “An Exploratory Study of Readers’ Advisory Services to Children”

I am Emily Childress-Campbell, a graduate student in the in the School of Information and Library Science. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study, “An Exploratory Study of Readers’ Advisory Services to Children” that I am conducted as part of the requirement for the masters paper portion of the Masters of Science in Library Science degree.

You may participate if you are a practicing children’s librarian and have experience providing readers’ advisory services to children.

As a participant, you will be asked a series of interview questions that focus on your experience providing readers' advisory services to children. Your responses will be audio recorded. The interview should take no more than forty five minutes. The interview will take place in the library in which you work. You will be sent the transcription of your interview for review. You will be asked to contact the principle investigator with any changes or deletions that you feel are necessary.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please email me at cmemily@email.unc.edu. If you have questions, please contact me at the above mentioned email address or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Brian Sturm, at sturm@ils.unc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sincerely,
Emily Childress-Campbell

Appendix B: Data Collection Instrument

Introduction: Hello, my name is Emily Childress-Campbell, I am a candidate for the Masters of Science in Library Science from the School of Information and Library Science at UNC-Chapel Hill, with a focus in Youth Services. For my master's paper I am conducting a series of interviews with children's libraries with the aim of gaining deeper understanding of the daily practice of connecting young readers to the next best book for them. Your name will never be attached to this interview in the research process or in the final write up and you may choose to stop participating at any time.

Demographics: Before we get started I would like to ask you a few questions in order to get to know you better.

Do you have a Masters of Library Science?

What percentage of your day is engaged in children's readers' advisory?

So you are a part time (or) full time employee?

Do you have other job responsibilities outside of your work with children?

How long have you been providing readers' advisory services to children?

Main Question:

How do you keep up to date in children's literature?

Probing Questions:

Do you read picture books?

Do you read juvenile fiction?

Do you read reviews?

Main question:

Tell me about the last time a child asked you to recommend a good book.

Probing Questions:

What did you do?/What did you do next?

How did you find the book?

How would you summarize your conversation with the child/parent?

Main Questions:

What would you say is your most commonly used method in helping children select books?

Probing Questions:

Do you rely on your own reading history?

Do you talk with the child about what they have read in the past?

What kinds of questions do you ask them?

Do you rely on knowledge of child development?

Main Question:

Are you familiar with the product NoveList K-8 Plus?

Probing Question:

Do you use this product to aid you in helping children select books?

What other resources do you use in helping children select books?

Main Question:

Are you aware of some of the best practices of helping patrons select books (also known as reader's advisory)?

Probing Questions:

How would you summarize these practices?

Do you find that these practices influence your practice of assisting children in finding books?

How do they influence your practice?

Main Question:

About how much time would you say you are able to devote to any particular child?

Probing Question:

What are some reasons for this limited/expansive time available?

Main Question:

Do you feel that you are able to keep up with reading new children's literature?

Main Question:

Have you ever had a parent or adult ask for a book for a child but the child was not present?

Probing Question:

How did you/would you handle this?

Closing: Thank you for your time! I will be sending you a transcription of the interview so that you will be able to read and review for accuracy.

Appendix C: Adult Consent Form

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Adult Participants

Consent Form Version Date: 1/16/13

IRB Study # 13-0129

Title of Study: "An Exploratory Study of Readers' Advisory Services to Children"

Principal Investigator: Emily Childress

Principal Investigator Department: School of Information and Library Science

Principal Investigator Phone number: (864) 979-6562

Principal Investigator Email Address: cmemily@email.unc.edu

Faculty Advisor: Brian Sturm

Faculty Advisor Contact Information:

Email Address: sturm@ils.unc.edu

Phone number: 919-962-7622

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary.

You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

Readers' advisory is generally thought to be the process through which a librarian connects a patron with a book that best fits their reading preferences. In the reader's advisory interview the librarian asks the patron a series of questions about what authors

and books the patron has liked in the past, what elements of a book the patron responds most to, what kinds of books the patron likes to read, etc. The librarian uses the information gathered in this interview as well as other tools to assist the patron in finding the right book. Children's librarians conduct the same kind of interview with their young patrons when helping them find new books. However, there are added considerations when assisting children. The purpose of this exploratory research study is to gain a greater understanding of the methods librarians are using in children's readers' advisory.

You are being asked to be in the study because you are a practicing children's librarian with experience providing readers' advisory services to children.

How many people will take part in this study?

There will be approximately eight people in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?

The semi-structured interview portion of the study should not exceed forty-five minutes. Once your interview has been transcribed it will be sent to you so that you may read and review it. You will be asked to contact the principal investigator if you wish any part of the transcript to be revised or deleted.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

You will be asked a series of interview questions that focus on your experience providing readers' advisory services to children. Your responses will be audio recorded. You will be sent the transcription of your interview for review. You will be asked to contact the principal investigator with any changes or deletions that you feel are necessary.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You will not benefit personally from being in this research study.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?

There are no known risks. There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

What if we learn about new findings or information during the study?

You will be given any new information gained during the course of the study that might affect your willingness to continue your participation.

How will information about you be protected?

There will be no identifiers attached to the recording of your interview. Only the principal investigator will have access to the original recordings. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Following transcription the recordings will be erased. During transcription the recordings will be stored on a secure,

password protected laptop computer that will only be accessed by the principal investigator. Pseudonyms will be used in the write up of the research. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety.

What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?

You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?

You will not receive anything for being in this study.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?

It will not cost you anything to be in this study.

What if you have questions about this study?

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions about the study, complaints, concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

Date

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent